Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-110. (Cancelled)

111. (Original) A method by which a client connected to a data repository over a lower speed network connection may provide higher speed access to a data item for application processing than is possible over the relatively low speed connection to the network, the method comprising:

determining a digital fingerprint of the data item;

testing for whether the data item is already stored in a repository by comparing the digital fingerprint of the data item to digital fingerprints of data items already in the repository;

only if the data item is not already in the repository, transferring the data item over the lower speed connection from the client to the repository;

assigning an expiration time to the data item, before which time deletion is prohibited;

making a higher speed connection between an application server and the data repository;

executing an application on the application server to process the data item stored on the data repository; and

returning at least some of the processed data to the client across the lower speed connection.

112. (Original) The method of claim 111 in which rules governing expiration and deletion are distributed among a plurality of storage sites.

113. (Original) The method of claim 111 in which the expiration time assigned to the data item depends upon expiration times assigned by the client programs.

114-163 (Cancelled)

164. (New) The method of claim 111 wherein the client deposits an entity version into the disk-based distributed data storage system and an expiration time is assigned to the entity version and no action taken by the client can change the expiration time assigned to the entity version to an earlier time.